Indian cavalrymen are recruited from the cream of Eastern soldiery. A considerable force of these troops are now in France.

LOVE OF BATTLE BORN IN ENGLAND'S INDIAN TROOPS

Tireless Native Warriors, Once Great Britain's Most Troublesome Foes, Are Proving Their Loyalty and Value on European Battlefield

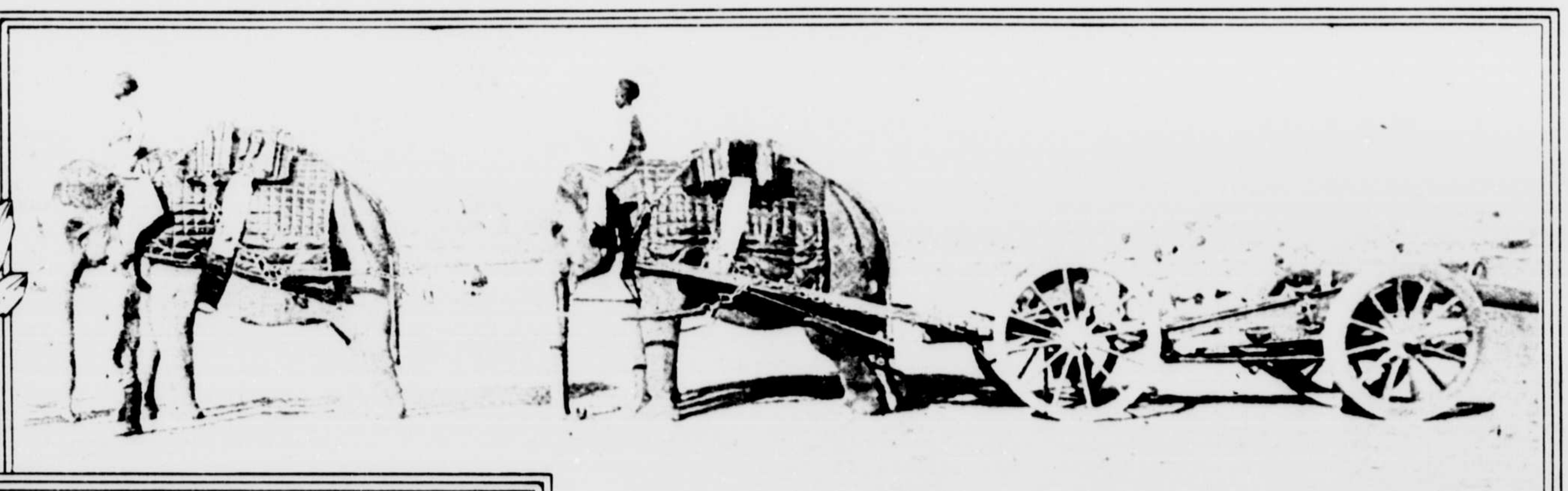
"SAHIB, the regiment is my father and mother, but in this matter my honor is concerned, and if I do not get the leave I ask I will desert; the night will find me there," said the East Indian soldier, pointing into the distance when his officer expressed unwillingness to grant the desired furlough. The trooper was a Pathan whose service record was a splendid one, and at last the leave he craved was reluctantly allowed him.

The officer had consented rather than force the Indian into insubordination. True to his promise, the soldier returned to the post on the very hour. Then it was that his commander questioned him about the reason for the leave which had been asked for well nigh with a threat. The reply was:

"Well, Sahib, the matter was thus: My brother was killed by one of another clan, and on me, as his nearest of kin, the feud devolved. Had I failed in my duty shame would have been on me, but by the pleasure of Allah this is not so. Our enemy's village now mourns one of its best and bravest."

Such are the Pathans, who constitute a very considerable element of England's native troops in India, although the general public has heard less of them than of some of the other contingents. The Pathans are principally recruited from tribes that dwell along the border between the Punjab and Afghanistan. By nature they are proud, fierce, turbulent and fanatically revengeful, and yet brave and capable of being turned into fine soldiers by careful management and a wealth of patient perseverance.

Once interested in his soldier work under British leadership the Pathan is intensely loyal, a fighting man that can be counted upon to battle with all his strength and to the last drop of his blood in the cause of his adoption. Indeed he loves the intoxication of strife, and he is a foe to be reckoned with until either dead or physically unable to deal a blow.



Indian heavy artillery.

Indian soldiers signalling with heliographs in the mountains.

Sergeant of the Bengal cavalry.

Somehow in stories of India the writer of fiction likes to bring in the picturesque Sikh, and for this reason foreigners have been led to the conclusion that the Indian native army is composed mostly of this race. That is not really the case, but it is a fact that the Sikh is a fighting man of proved quality, and upon more than one battlefield he has won renown and shown amazing dauntlessness in the face of desperate odds.

Before British annexation the Sikhs held and ruled the Punjab, and being born soldiers they presented a very difficult problem to their alien masters until their admiration was won by the battling superiority of the British, and then they were ready to cast their lot with their quondam foes and to put into their service that whole heartedness peculiar to a liking bred of a sense of fellowship in the grim work of the man of war. The Sikhs are principally enlisted from around Amritsar, their holy city and the birthplace of their religion. This matter of religion, by the way, plays an important part in the problem of administering the native army.

Also from among the up country races is the Jat, who is recruited from the region around Delhi. The Jats are of a farming peasant stock, physically a robust lot and capable of being wrought into excellent soldiers. The Dogras are likewise from the Punjab and are mostly to be found in the country in touch with the lower ranges of the Himalayas. It is said that the Dogras are of mixed descent, and while wanting in the characteristic dash of the Sikh are nevertheless brave, docile and trustworthy.

The Indian cavalry, of which a very considerable force is now in France, is one of the most notable branches of Great Britain's Indian army. These troopers are recruited from the very cream of the Eastern soldiery, are splendidly drilled and disciplined and have no superiors in any other service.

As a writer familiar with these men has said: "They are grand in quality, by no means small in quantity, for they number roughly some 25,000 officers and men and are divided into forty regiments." Among these are the Bengal Cavalry, the Madras Cavalry, the Bombay Cavalry, the Punjab Cavalry, the Central India Horse and a number of other units that have to their credit an imposing array of battle honors.

Apart from a certain proportion of English officers the troop leaders and commanders are native born, and these men represent racial traditions that mark them soldiers in every fibre of their getup and in every conscious action. They rise to their positions by reason of merit, and merit only, and they are the very pick of a splendid body. An Englishman who spent some years in India has thus described the impression made upon him by native cavalry officers:

"It is customary on certain festivals for the native officers to visit European officers for the purpose of tendering their respects, and it was on the occasion of one of these visits to the officer with whom I was residing that I made my first acquaintance with the native cavalryman. As each one of the stalwart, bearded, soldierly looking group entered the veranda he tendered to his host the hilt of his sword in courteous signification that it and its owner were at his service. Not an atom of servility was noticeable, but rather a marked manliness and courtesy in bearing and conversation that stamped each man in the crowd as unmistakably a soldier and a gentleman. The impression of their worth then made has only been confirmed by subsequent years of intercourse, both in peace and war."

As has been said, the question of religion plays a more or less troublesome or difficult part in the administration of the Indian army. The cavalry regiments are composed of contingents from various races, and it is certainly creditable to British leadership that it has been able to work into stalwart defenders of the empire peoples that were not only bitter enemies to the white man but equally hostile toward one another. The Sikh and the Pathan heartily dislike each other. The Jat is unpopular with the Sikh, and in turn is despised by the Mohammedan, whom he abominates with corresponding vigor.

In a few cases the authorities have found it best not to mix these antagonistic races or religious sects, and therefore there are some so-called class regiments in which the ranks are recruited from Indians of one race or one religion. Again it is usual to form each of the various squadrons of a cavalry regiment of a single class, and this makes for peace among people to whom the question of caste is in some instances of really vital concern.

While the Sikhs and the Dogras and the Pathans give a strikingly ornamental character to the Indian army because of their rather showy dress and parade of color, Tommy Atkins will tell you if you ask him that his preference is for the little Ghoorkas, those grim but humorous soldiers of the Crown who have won many laurels in their native land in the last eighty-odd years. Somehow the smile comes more naturally to the Ghoorka than the frown, but don't mistake his cheerfulness for a sign of subserviency or lack of courage. The Ghoorka is one nervous, ever ready bundle of aggressiveness. It would be hard to imagine more fighting spirit to the ounce than has been crowded into the muscular bodies of these born warriors.

They are a broad shouldered, sturdy lot, hardened by hill climbing in the land of their birth, Nepaul, the mountain kingdom resting on the southern slope of the Himalayas at the northeast corner of India. By some critics the Ghoorkas have been described as the most loyal native soldiers serving under the English flag. They are fortunately not hampered by caste prejudices and will sit down in camp with white troops and eat and drink with them without ceremony.

It is said that next to bravery the Ghoorka's most characteristic quality is his vanity—really the pride of achievement, because once he has won a position against the foe it is well nigh impossible to dislodge him. He simply must fight until he is knocked over or killed.

There are lots of stories in the British army about these jovial but grim fighting men. At the siege of Bhurtpore the Ghoorkas raced with the Fifty-ninth Regiment of British home troops to the breach that had been made by the attacking guns. Afterward, when complimented for their dash, they naively answered:

"The English are as brave as lions, and very nearly equal to us."

Again, at the battle of Kandahar, the Ninety-second Highlanders were ordered to charge some of the enemy's guns which were costing the British force dearly. A Ghoorka joined in the charge with the doughty Scotchmen and was one of the first to reach and to capture a gun. It was apparently a personal matter with that husky little hillman, because, thrusting his cap into the still smoking muzzle of the piece, he cried exultantly:

"This gun belongs to my regiment—Second Ghoorkas, Prince of Wales!"

There was the time when the Ghoorkas were Great Britain's liveliest and most troublesome foe. A hundred years ago the English had the Ghoorka war on their hands, and for two years the military authorities had a troublesome problem to deal with. The conflict grew out of encroachments on British territory by these aggressive hillmen.

In the early stages of the war the Ghoorkas not only held the English troops in check but defeated them decisively upon a number of occasions. Following one of these fights several of the Ghoorkas wandered into the British camp without guns and asked to have their wounds dressed, saying that they thought the English doctors would be able to make them quickly fit for the next fight.

In the end these battling children of the soil were beaten and cornered, and after that they became lasting friends and allies of the English. It is said that since then, now ninety-eight years, "no battle or expedition of importance has been without its battalions of green-coated little riflemen with their deadly kukris in their belts. These they use for stabbing the enemy when they get in among them."

The fraternizing spirit of the Ghoorka has made him a welcome companion to British home troops upon many occasions when battling in India, while his soldierly capacity has justly won for him the high regard in which he is uniformly held. During the Hunza-Nagar campaign of 1891 a mere handful of these tireless fighters held out against an overwhelming mass of hostile natives at Manipur. When their British officers were murdered these gallant soldiers formed about the widow of one of them and carried her right through the enemy's country to safety, holding off their frenzied antagonists well nigh every mile of the way.

They played an important part in the Chitral expedition of 1895 and, again, in 1899, on the Tirah expedition the Ghoorkas had much to do with the successful outcome. As an English writer has said: "At the celebrated storming of Dargai they were the first to attempt to charge up the slope and they suffered severely in consequence. It was the Ghoorkas who were utilized to turn the tables on the snipers and so well did they do it that sniping became a very dangerous pastime for the wily Afridi." As a matter of record, many of the Ghoorkas boast the proud possession of the Order of Merit, given only for conspicuous gallantry in action.

The native soldier makes an excellent marksman, and among the Indian contingent there are a great many first class sharpshooters. Despite siege guns and heavy artillery the keen eyed rifleman is quite as much at a premium today as in the past, and these marksmen from the East are proving their value now.

But long range fighting is not quite to their liking; they love the intoxication of a hand to hand struggle, and their work with the bayonet and the knife is enough to chill the blood of any but the most courageous of antagonists. The bulk of the native Indian infantry are natural born athletes, and like most men bred in the hills, extremely active and wonderfully quick upon their feet. A bayonet in their hands becomes a doubly dangerous weapon, and in close fighting they excel.

A question has arisen often of late as to the physical fitness of the Indian troops upon a European battlefield, inspired, no doubt, by the idea that climatic conditions were against these men from the East. The fact is that a large percentage of the troops which England has brought from India are men from the uplands or hill country. They are used to wide ranges of temperature and will probably fight better as the colder season approaches. Some of the regiments have brought their native commissary stores and the special camp equipment peculiar to the troops among which the formalities of caste are strictly observed. This provision will enable them to live very much as at home and, for that reason, will contribute to their efficiency.

Three Prehistoric Races

IN an ancient Nebraska valley which nature filled up a thousand years and more ago archæologists from Peabody Museum, Harvard University, have just discovered the ruins of three prehistoric villages of three distinct peoples. The valley is twenty-five miles below Omaha, near the Missouri River. In recent years a small stream has cut its way through the deposits of hundreds of years and exposed the remains of the villages far below the present surface of the valley.

Reading the history of the valley from the steep sides of the ravine the scientists see that ages ago the place was thickly populated. Time passed, the valley was deserted and the wash of centuries from the surrounding hills partially filled the depression.

Again a prehistoric people, another race, settled in the valley and lived until they, in turn, passed away. Another age followed and again many feet of earth washed down from the hills, still further filling up the valley, and in time a third people settled there, only to disappear before the coming of the Pawnees, who had for centuries lived in the Platte River Valley when Coronado, the Spaniard, came in 1541.

The legends of the third people to inhabit the valley had been forgotten centuries ago. There has never been a tradition of the second race, and as for the first people who left their remains in the ravine the Harvard scientists will not even venture a guess about them. But the remains of the first people are far more numerous than those of their successors.

Prof. Frederick H. Sterns of Harvard, who heads the expedition, was passing through the ravine when he saw a white vein of ashes in the side of the bluff low down by the little stream. A brief inspection showed that he had found a cross section of an ancient house site, with a fireplace in the centre [illegible] bones of animals and pot [illegible] protruding from the ashes. There were also broken pottery, flint flakes [illegible] axe and other rude implements.

Further search disclosed [illegible] of nine other house sites on the same level. Later, by boring with a prospecting auger, it was found [illegible] ravine had been fairly dotted [illegible] houses of this people.

Then one of the members of [illegible] discovered a house site far [illegible] side of the ravine. The remains of pottery and implements showed [illegible] different race altogether had [illegible] this site. A few days [illegible] houses were discovered [illegible] below the present level of [illegible] and in these were the remains of another people. Immediately [illegible] lowest stratum of houses [illegible] bed eight feet thick, and [illegible] this fact that so many [illegible] daily life of this race w[illegible] so well.

One of the last acts of the [illegible] of one of the ancient house [illegible] dulge in a great feast. And [illegible] probably had no alphabet [illegible] they left behind them a [illegible] can easily be read by the ar[illegible] A feast such as those old [illegible] dulged in would cost a fortune [illegible] days. All of this is indicated [illegible] remains found on the top [illegible] heap far beneath the surface [illegible] ground.

There are the long bones of [illegible] bones of half a dozen varieties [illegible] the wishbone of a wild goose [illegible] bone of a deer, the pelvis of [illegible] the jaw of a wolf, bones [illegible] ferent species of birds, the [illegible] turtle, a gallon or two of [illegible] and the remains of a buffalo [illegible] charred squash seeds preserved [illegible] peat show that these people were agriculturists. Last of all [illegible] the heap there were two [illegible] indicating that even in that [illegible] the aborigines were users of [illegible]

Dr. R. F. Gilder, field arch[illegible] of the University of Nebraska [illegible] made a special study of prehistoric pottery, says that the pots made by the first people in this valley are different in design and decoration [illegible] any that he has ever examined [illegible] believes the makers existed [illegible] of years ago.